

## Ezra 3:1-13, “Starting from Scratch”

### 3:1

There were 7 holidays in ancient Israel, 3 of these holidays were in the month of Tishri.

1. Feast of Trumpets: repentance, no work (lasting 10 days).
2. Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). The day the high priest offered blood sacrifice in the Holy of Holies to atone for the sins of the people. God covered the sins of His people (Heb. 10).
3. Feast of Booths (Tabernacles, Ingathering). THIS is 1 of 3 Annual Feasts/Gatherings:  
\*Spring: Passover. \*\*Summer: Pentecost (Weeks, Harvest). \*\*\*Fall: Booths

### Why do we meet together in worship?

1. Theological. The Gathering & the Scattering of the Saints.
2. Scriptural. Heb. 10:24-25, “*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love & good works, <sup>25</sup>not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*”
3. Practical. 59 ‘One Anothers’ in the NT.

### 3:2

#### Why build the altar before the temple was built?

1. Obedience. They needed an altar to resume burnt offerings to atone for sin. Also, for morning & evening offerings as written in the law by Moses.
2. Forgiveness of the past & dedication to the Lord in the future. First act of Abraham in the land of promise. Burnt offering: burn the whole animal; act of total dedication to God.
3. “Do what you can with what you have where you are” – Teddy Roosevelt

### 3:3

#### For application sake, is there an altar for us to draw near?

- All sacrifices pointed to Christ & His death on the cross. Heb. 10:12, “[W]hen Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.”
- As they offered sacrifices to God, we offer spiritual sacrifices. Rm.12:1, “[P]resent your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy & acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”
- What is the attitude that we should have in these spiritual sacrifices? Repentance & Faith.
  - Ps. 66:18, “If I had regarded sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.”
  - Heb. 11:6, “[W]ithout faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists & that he rewards those who seek Him.”

### 3:4-5

#### Biblical Worship: What does the Bible say...about worship?

1. Meant to glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31)
2. Ordered by the Word of God—not by the world or other churches (1 Tim. 3:15).
3. Not limited to song, although singing is vitally important (1 Tim. 4:13).

4. Used for teaching. Col. 3:16 “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching & admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms & hymns & spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to Gd.* (Arius, 3<sup>rd</sup> c. false teacher: Council of Laodicea, AD 367.)
5. A variety of instruments may be used (Ps. 150: trumpet, tambourine, strings, etc.)
6. Voices of the peoples need to be heard (Ps. 100:1, “*Shout joyfully to the Lord*”)
7. Comes down to a proper attitude of the heart (Jn. 4:24, “*Worship in spirit & truth*”)  
\*Not external: a certain type of music or instruments—it comes from the heart!

### Conclusion

1. When fear strikes you, your safest place is the altar of God (run to the cross).
2. “*Do what you can with what you have, where you are.*” Os Guinness: “*In terms of influence, the problem is not that most Christians aren’t where they should be, but that they aren’t what they should be where they are.*”
3. Biblical worship is ordered by God’s revelation, NOT the world.
4. Do not say, “*Why were the old days better than these...*” (Your better days may be behind you, but your BEST days are in front of you...)